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Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

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Strengthening of the rule of law

The General Assembly,

Recalling that, by adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[1] fifty-four years ago, Member States pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

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Firmly convinced that the rule of law is an essential factor in the protection of human rights, as stressed in the Declaration, and should continue to attract the attention of the international community,

Convinced that, through their own national legal and judicial systems, States must provide appropriate civil, criminal and administrative remedies for violations of human rights,

Recognizing the importance of the role that can be played by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in supporting national efforts to strengthen the institutions of the rule of law,

Bearing in mind that, in its resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, the General Assembly entrusted the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with, inter alia, providing advisory services and technical and financial assistance in the field of human rights, enhancing international cooperation for the promotion and protection of all human rights and coordinating human rights activities throughout the United Nations system,

Recalling the recommendation of the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, that a comprehensive programme should be established within the United Nations with a view to helping States in the task of building and strengthening adequate national structures that have a direct impact on the overall observance of human rights and the maintenance of the rule of law,[2]

Recalling also its resolutions 53/142 of 9 December 1998 and 55/99 of 4 December 2000,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General;[3]

2. *Also welcomes* the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to make the promotion of the rule of law a priority in its technical cooperation programmes;[4]

3. *Notes with appreciation* the increasing number of Member States seeking assistance in strengthening and consolidating the rule of law, which indicates the growing awareness of its importance, and the support provided to these States through the technical cooperation programme of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as outlined in the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General;

4. *Praises* the efforts made by the Office of the High Commissioner to accomplish its ever-increasing tasks, in a wide range of areas, with the limited financial and personnel resources at its disposal;

5. *Expresses its deep concern* at the scarcity of means at the disposal of the Office of the High Commissioner for the fulfilment of its tasks;

6. *Notes with concern* that the United Nations Programme of Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights does not have sufficient funds to provide any substantial financial assistance to national projects that have a direct impact on the realization of human rights and the maintenance of

[2] See A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III, sect. II, para. 69.
[3] A/57/275.
[4] Ibid., para. 1.

the rule of law in countries that are committed to those ends but are lacking the necessary means and resources;

7. *Welcomes* the deepening of the ongoing cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner and other relevant bodies and programmes of the United Nations system, with a view to enhancing the system-wide coordination of assistance in human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and in this context notes the cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the High Commissioner in providing technical assistance, at the request of States, in the promotion of the rule of law;

8. *Also welcomes* the assistance of the Office of the High Commissioner in the design of human rights components of United Nations peace operations and in providing advice once they are formed, including in the field of rule of law;[5]

9. *Reaffirms* that the Office of the High Commissioner remains the focal point for coordinating system-wide attention for human rights, democracy and the rule of law;

10. *Encourages* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue the dialogue between his Office and other organs and agencies of the United Nations system, taking into account the need to explore new synergies with a view to obtaining increased financial assistance for human rights and the rule of law and to promoting inter-agency coordination, funding and allocation of responsibilities in order to improve efficiency and complementarity of action concerning, inter alia, assistance to States in strengthening the rule of law;

11. *Also encourages* the High Commissioner to continue to explore the possibility of further contact with and support from the international financial institutions, acting within their mandates, with a view to obtaining the technical and financial means to strengthen the capacity of the Office of the High Commissioner to provide assistance to national projects aiming at the realization of human rights and the maintenance of the rule of law;

12. *Requests* the High Commissioner to continue to accord high priority to the technical cooperation activities undertaken by his Office with regard to the rule of law and to continue to act as a catalyst in the system by, inter alia, helping other United Nations agencies and programmes, within their respective mandates, to include in their work, as appropriate, attention to institution-building in the area of the rule of law;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution and the above-mentioned recommendation of the World Conference on Human Rights.

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[5] Ibid., para. 12.